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| Theme | Water Stewardship |
| Title | Distribution of Benefits in Watershed Development Programmes |
| State (s) | Rajasthan |
| District (s) | 6 blocks of Jhalawar, Pratapgarh, Bhilwara and Bundi |
| Evaluation Agency | DSC Foundation |
| Period of Study | April – September 2016 |

Executive Summary

Objective(s):

Gain insights into, and understanding of, dynamics within village communities that determine access to common pool resources like water and fodder and if these watershed projects were able to ensure a more equitable access regime.

Key Findings:

- Visible reduction in soil erosion, decrease in runoff velocity along with a corresponding increase in subsurface infiltration. Thus project area watersheds could tolerate longer dry spells as compared to the control areas.
- Overall increase in groundwater level which enabled more farmers to grow wheat by buying water from neighbouring wells.
- Increase in share of fodder consumption from the restored commons in total fodder consumption; reduction in time and labour for collection of fodder; and increased availability of fuel in most villages.
- Livestock ownership increased by 45% in project villages, with a shift in the livestock mix from small ruminants to large ruminants and an increase in the total quantity of milk sold.
- Increase in average number of labour hired post intervention and consequential reduction in migration

Areas of Improvement

- Socio-cultural practices deny women-headed households of field labourers to work on their plots and they are forced to do so on their own. A gender appropriate mechanisation or pooling of labour from women-headed households could be examined.
- While overemphasizing irrigation oriented growth strategy in the rainfed region, the much needed effort to sensitize the community in judiciously using the water resource or exploring good cultivation practices and inputs with limited water assurance was missing. Hence the need of shift in focus from irrigation led development approach to sustainable resource use approach.
- Ban on open grazing in commons has had negative externalities on poor households and pastoralists owning sheep/goats.
- Encourage formation and implementation of formal rules on groundwater distribution and management to prevent excess withdrawal. In tandem, promote water use efficiency in agriculture to maintain a positive water balance.

- Ensure execution of a clear withdrawal strategy for structural maintenance and equity in ground water withdrawal and sharing of other common resources.

In case you would like to know more on the study please write to us at: itcmsk@itc.in